The Builder.

No. CCCIII.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1846.

IF Lord Morpeth and the Government were sincere, when they stipulated that if the appearance of the Wellington colossus on the arch was not satisfactory to competent persons, after being "on liking" for three weeks, it should come down,—*down, unquestionably*, IT MUST COME. As the network of timber is removed spar by spar from before it, so do the folly of the experiment, the absurdity of the conjunction, and the greatness of the sacrifice become apparent. Its effect is even worse than we anticipated,—the destruction of the arch by the statue, and of the statue by its elevation on the arch, more complete. Every post brings us letters urging renewed efforts to remove the figure to another site, but not a single line have we received in praise of its present position, or even in defence of it. The case is hopeless: surely no one *can* praise the appearance presented who is competent and unbiassed.

A respectable morning paper, indeed, impelled perhaps by kindly feelings, is so bold as to urge, that "so far as the objection to this site, on the score of the statue being too large in its proportions for the arch, is concerned, we believe it will be found that the fault (if fault there be) will be directly the reverse;" and elsewhere says, "if any thing, the arch is too large for the statue!

It is, indeed, too large,—too lofty, considered as a pedestal, in which character alone it is regarded by the two or three journals who have in a still, small voice, endeavoured to defend what we hope will prove, the untenable position. Thus, the *Observer* says, after finding great fault with the statue,—"if the artist were called upon to erect a pedestal for his own work, it is doubtful whether he would have selected one that fits it so well in every requisite particular, namely, elevation, size, and situation."

Proh Pudor! But the fact, without stopping to deny this altogether, is, as we have repeated over and over again, that the arch was not intended to be a pedestal, but a structure,—a monument of itself, and if embellished as proposed by its architect, with a statue flanking the attic, over each column, trophies on the main piers, sculpture in relief on the face of the attic, and a quadriga on the top, of proper size as a decoration,—an accessory, not the principal,—would have been a worthy adornment of the metropolis. Used as it now is, that character has entirely disappeared; all the money expended upon it is utterly thrown away and wasted, while, as a pedestal, it is wholly inappropriate and unfit.

The artist must feel by this time how much he, individually, has lost by the obstinacy of the committee. Seen sufficiently near to the eye to distinguish all the parts, and on such a pedestal as should make its colossal size apparent, the merits of the work would be found greatly to overweigh its defects,—and the vastness of the undertaking, the labour, energy, and skill required to carry it out, which are not now felt by the beholder in the slightest degree, would gain for the sculptor the applause which he deserves.

As seen, however, on the top of the arch, where the outline alone can be embraced, it is, as a work of art, and irrespective of the inappropriate pedestal, an utter failure,—mawkish, effectless, and insipid; conveying no clear idea, exciting no lofty emotion.

We have scarcely patience to speak calmly, when we reflect on the evil done,—two monuments destroyed, two artists injured, and a whole nation in a degree disgraced.

Earnestly then we express a hope that Lord Morpeth's stipulation was not merely a blind, being satisfied that in that case, as we have already said, the statue *must* come down.

That this much desired step will expose all concerned in it to a shower of ridicule, is certain; we trust, however, that the fear of this will not operate on the decision. It is better to be laughed at for a week, than condemned for a century: and nobler to acknowledge an error and retrace your steps, than to persist in it to the injury of others.

Still, dreading lest the same determination and influence which, unnecessarily and at such great cost, lifted the enormous mass on to the arch in opposition to the will of the House of Commons, to see "how it would look," may succeed, despite the almost universal opinion, in keeping it there, without that opinion make itself loudly heard,—we would suggest that a respectful protest against its continuance on the arch, addressed to her Majesty, should be forthwith drawn up for signature, and should lie, during a specified time, at some public place for that purpose. The accomplished professor, whose personal protest we commented on a short time since, would but perform a duty he owes the public were he to imitate this measure, and would thereby entitle himself to the thanks of every lover of art, and of every man jealous for the reputation of England in matters of taste.

In the case of a recent competition, where professional assistance was desired in the selection of plans for premiums, letters appear to have been addressed, by order of the committee, to several eminent architects, stating their wish, and asking "for what amount of remuneration they would undertake the task." Whether the committee took the *cheapest* that offered, or managed to find one who, for love of art and fair play, was willing to do it for nothing, has not reached us. It seems rather a new move, however, thus to seduce even the old stagers into *a competition*, and that, too, on so low a ground as *prices*. We shall, perhaps, hear more of it.

It will not surprise us to see, one of these days, advertisements such as this, with a difference: "To architects and surveyors. Professional advice wanted, in the case Easygo *v.* Gammonall. Letters, post-paid, stating lowest price per day, including cab-hire and expenses, to be addressed to Ignatius Loyala Lofty, Esq., solicitor, of Lions Inn. Write soon, to prevent disappointment, as applicants will be numerous!!"

The Kensington Board of Guardians have set an example to competition committees which will, we trust, be imitated; and have given a lesson to disingenuous competitors, likely, when generally known, to produce a salutary effect. The guardians advertised, as our readers may have seen, premiums for the first and second best plans for a new workhouse; with the understanding that the author of the first set, if a competent person, would be employed to superintend the execution of the work. The cost was not to exceed 9,000*l.*

Twenty-two designs, some of them very elaborately displayed, were sent in; and from these the Board selected a set by a Mr. Blore, as No. 1 (chiefly because it promised more for money than the others), and a set by Mr. Allom as No. 2. When, however, the selected plans had been forwarded to the Poor Law Commissioners and precise estimates were needed, the fact came out that the building would cost nearer 18,000*l.* than 9,000*l.*; in other words, that the plans were a deception. Upon which the guardians very properly revoked their decision, returned the plans, and selected the design No. 2 for execution, provided the same can be carried out for the sum named. The injustice that would have been committed if the Board had not acted thus (and which, in the case of the Consumption Hospital herd by, *was* committed), is too apparent to need comment.

ANNOTATIONS ON IRON.*

Few contrivances connected with the working of iron are of more value than those which perform the operations of *planeing*: by means of these powerful machines, that obdurate material, whatever its form—plane, cylinder, cone, or sphere, whether simple or in any combination, however complicated, and therefore embracing every shape which machinery can assume, can be reduced to a surface the most mathematically true, and that with the utmost facility—human labour being superseded, and human superintendence alone wanted. The advantage which a planed bar over a ground surface, consists in its being exempt from those irregular masses which, upon close examination, are to be detected in the latter, and which proceed from the difficulty of obtaining an equal distribution of the grinding powder: these irregularities being absent in planed plates, their bearing points are so infinite, that if one be placed on another, it will float until by its weight it in a great measure excludes the air, when the two will adhere together with considerable force; and that with the more certainty if the very smooth surface produced by a repetition of the planing process is bestowed on them. The immense power of these machines, and the hardness of the cutting instrument—which encounters such resistance for perhaps a day together, without becoming inoperative—may be imagined, when it is considered that this resistance against the edge of the latter, in a large machine, amounts to as much as thirty tons.

Of the operation of *iron-turning*, on its largest scale, an idea may be formed by imagining the paddle-shafts, one at a time, of some immense steamer, fixed in the lathe, ten tons in weight, and revolving rapidly; while the chisel moves steadily along in its slide, and turns off, as if it were but lead, a continuous shaving of iron, perhaps thirty or forty feet long, and curled up like the worm of a screw, one of its edges, probably, split into short regular teeth like a fine comb, from the pressure of the tool, and the only food of which is a constant dropping of water upon it during its progress to and fro, either in this or the planeing process: or, it may be, the top, whether flat or hollowed, of a steam cylinder, companion to the shafts, eighty inches in diameter, and as bright as a mirror. Articles of such magnitude as these, finished with ease and unerring accuracy, by a self-acting process—the work only requiring to be placed in the lathe, and the tool to be set—the machine doing the rest, afford a fair criterion on the subject.

The importance of making good *welds* cannot be more forcibly inculcated than by adverting to the frightful loss of life which took place at Yarmouth on the 2nd of May last year, from the falling of the suspension-bridge across the river Bure, the leading cause of which, according to the report of Mr. Walker, the engineer, who was appointed by Government to ascertain the origin of the catastrophe, was the defective joining of the short pieces containing the eyes to the ends of the rods forming the chains—the appearance of the fracture

* See page 471, *ante*.

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